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LETTERS

OF

THOMAS NELSON, JR.,

Governor of Virginia.

RICHMOND:
Virginia Historical Society.
ANNO MDCCCLXXIV.

[EDITION OF 500 COPIES ONLY.]

No.

THESE LETTERS, from the pen of Governor THOMAS NELSON, JR., *relate to the siege of Yorktown, the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, and the Naval and Military movements which resulted in that decisive triumph of the Continental arms, and are now published for the first time.*

THE VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY *are gratified to have this opportunity of quickening the public interest in Governor Nelson, whose example of self-sacrificing patriotism will outlast the bronze which commemorates his name.*

LETTERS.

Thos. Nelson, Jr., B. G. to Major Dick.

Holt's Forge, Jan'y 8th, 1781. after 6 P.M

NOTHING has offered ſince I laſt wrote, which renders it neceſſary to vary the orders then given. It was my wiſh to have collected the troops on this ſide of James River to one point, that if any opportunity presented itself of gaining an advantage of the enemy, we might have ſeized it to the beſt effect. For this reaſon I ſhould this night have marched the troops here towards your ſtation, but that this would have thrown our whole force too far into ye rear of the enemy, to give any protection to the lower country, ſhould the enemy embark in any ſhort time, which I think not improbable. If they ſhould not, I ſhall to-morrow morning draw cloſer to them by the way of Charles City Court Houſe, and wiſh you to keep as near them as you prudently can. In caſe of their embarkation and going down the River, you will march your troops by the moſt direct

direct Route towards Williamsburg. I am, dear Sir,

Your very h'ble servant,

Gov'r Nelson to the Marquis de la Fayette.

SIR:

Richmond June 28th, 1781.

In consequence of your first requisition of Militia to join Gen. Wayne and to proceed to So. Caro., the executive directed a seventh part of the Militia of several counties nearest the borders of Carolina, to rendezvous immediately—these it was supposed would amount to about 1000 or 1200 men. Afterwards, when you desired the number to be augmented to 2000, the same counties were called on to increase their numbers to one fourth, w'ch would produce more than you required; no part of the British army having gone southwardly, as was apprehended when the latter requisition was made, a doubt has arisen whether you may now think 2000 men necessary for the Southern service. What renders the sending a greater number of men on this expedition, than the service absolutely requires, a matter of more moment than it otherwise would be, is the scarcity of Public Arms, and the probability there is, that we shall want as many as we can collect in

in other quarters. The executive wiſh to have your ſentiments on this ſubject.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to the Count De Graſſe.

SIR:

The arrival of his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty's fleet under your command in Cheſapeake Bay, was yeſterday announced to me while in the Marquis de la Fayette's camp. I take the earlieſt opportunity of congratulating you on your ſafe arrival, and of acknowledging this ſignal proof of the attention of our very great and generous ally, and the alacrity with which you, Sir, and the other officers of this fleet and army, execute his intentions in our favour. An armament ſo powerful and competent to every purpoſe, will not only give a fortunate turn to our Military operations, but will convince the incredulous and diſaffected, who may ſtill lurk amongſt us, that his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty is, both ſincerely determined, and fully able, to ſupport the American United States, in vindicating their rights and maintaining their independence. It will be my greateſt happineſs to contribute every thing in my power towards the ſpeedy and ſucceſsful accompliſhment of the object we have in view, and to render the ſervice in this State agreeable to the officers and men

Richmond Sept'r 2d, 1781.

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men of his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty's Fleet and Army.

Gov'r Nelson to the President of Congress.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 2d, 1781.

It is with great pleaſure I inform you of the arrival of the Count De Graſſe, in Cheſapeake Bay, with a very powerful armament. We are making every exertion to improve this favorable opportunity of ſtriking a blow, which will not only, for the preſent, relieve this State from the ravages of war, but will have the ſtrongeſt tendency to bring our juſt conteſt to a ſpeedy and happy concluſion.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to Gov'r Lee (of Maryland).

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 2d, 1781.

On the 31ſt of Auguſt, the French Fleet, commanded by the Count De Graſſe, consisting of 28 ſhips of the line and ſix Frigates, with 3,000 land Forces, arrived in Cheſapeake Bay. They have made ſuch diſpoſitions as will prevent the Britiſh army, now at York, from croſſing James River below the Falls, ſhould they attempt

attempt to eſcape to the ſouthward; and I truſt we ſhall, in conjunction with the French Troops, be able to oppoſe to them ſuch a Force as will keep them from penetrating weſterly, in order to croſs the country higher up. In all human Probability, Lord Cornwallis has nearly finiſhed his career, and will ſhortly receive his reward. We are making the greateſt exertions to procure abundant and permanent ſupplies of Proviſions for the fleet of our Allies and our combined forces, and although our proſpects are good, yet, ſo anxious am I that there ſhould be no deficiency on this ſcore, I wiſh us to have ſome other dependence than the ſupplies of this State. Flour is an article which we may probably moſt want, and particularly for the preſent, and it is one with which your State, I imagine, can eaſily and plentifully furniſh us. I would therefore take the liberty of recommending it to your conſideration, whether it will not be adviſable to have conſiderable quantities of it immediately ſent down the Bay.

I am, Sir, with the greateſt eſteem and reſpect,

Your mo. obed't and very hum. serv't,

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Capt. Pierce, Smithfield.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 2d, 1781.

The armament that has lately arrived to our aſſiſtance will require large ſupplies of Vegetables and Vinegar, both which articles uſed to be produced in great abundance in your and the adjacent counties. Your known zeal for your country's welfare has induced me to take the liberty of requeſting your aid in procuring theſe articles. If you wiſh a supply of money for this purpoſe, you ſhall be furniſhed with it upon application. Hog Iſland will be a proper place to convey the things to, from whence they will be taken by the ſhips, unleſs you ſhould find it more convenient to convey them from Smithfield by water; which, I imagine, might be done with ſafety at this time.

Gov'r Nelson to John Brown, Esq., Commissary-General.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 2d, 1781.

The very large ſupplies of proviſions neceſſary for the armanent lately arrived, and for the troops expected from the Northward, require the moſt vigorous and unremitting exertions. For the northern troops, your attention muſt

muſt be immediately turned towards Alexandria, from thence, through that neck of land to Fredericksburg, to Gloſter and the Marquis' camp. For the French troops, the ſupplies may most eaſily be drawn from James River and its waters. This will be an extenſive buſineſs, and will demand many able and active men to execute it. Diſappointment will be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences.

I have written to the County Lieutenants to urge the Commiſſioners to alacrity in their department, and alſo to procure all the Waggons that they poſſibly can. Let me recommend to you again the cloſeſt application towards furniſhing an immediate ſupply.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to Mr. Pierce.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 2d, 1781. 8 o'clock P. M.

I am this moment informed, by the hon'ble Major-General Marquis la Fayette, that the French Troops are landing at James Town. I desire you will immediately repair thither, and adopt every meaſure in your power to ſupply them with whatever they may want, that comes within your department.

Gov'r Nelson to Gov'r Burke.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 3d, 1781.

Your letter of the 15th of the laſt month was received here at a time when I was on a viſit to camp, which detained me till the day before yeſterday. At preſent, I ſhall beg leave to wave any anſwer to its contents, but haſten to inform you of an event which will give you more pleaſure than a thouſand obſervations on the matters which lately engaged our attentions. The Count De Graſſe arrived in our Bay three days ago with a Fleet of 28 ſhips of the line and ſix frigates, together with three thouſand land forces. By a letter from the Marquis la Fayette, received laſt night, I am informed that the French troops had begun to land at James Town. This friendly armament is ſo formidable that, I flatter myſelf, no hoſtile one can arrive which will venture to attack them, or be able to ſnatch from us our prey. Your own feelings on this Occaſion will enable you to judge of ours. As we ought to provide againſt every thing which can poſſibly happen to diſappoint our high wrought expectations, will it not be well for you to keep a watchful eye on the movements of the Southern foe, as, I believe, you have nothing to apprehend from this quarter? The enemy will not loſe ſuch an army as Cornwallis' without the greateſt exertions, on all ſides. But what raiſes our Hopes and Joys to the moſt exalted Pitch, and which I have reſerved

ſerved to the laſt, to crown the political Feast which this letter will afford you, is a movement of our great general, who, on the 27th of the laſt month, was at Chatham, with all the French troops of the Northern Army, and a body of Continentals, on his march for Virginia.

Gov'r Nelson to Lord Cornwallis.

My Lord:

From the aſſurance given me in a letter I received from you of Aug't 5th, that all ſuch perſons as I deſcribed Meſſrs. Archer and Ryàll to be, were ordered to be releaſed, I reſted ſatisfied that thoſe gentlemen had obtained their liberty. But I am juſt informed that they are ſtill in confinement on board of one of your Lordſhip's Priſon Ships; which, from your letter, I muſt ſuppoſe to be a circumſtance with which you are not acquainted. I am, therefore, again to deſire your attention to theſe gentlemen, and aſſure myſelf that you will order them to be released.

Richmond Sept'r 3d, 1781.

I am your Lordſhip's mo. obed't and
mo. hum. ſerv't,

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Thos. Newton, Jr., Esqr.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 4th, 1781.

It appearing to the Executive a matter of confequence that the French Fleet be plentifully ſupplied with many articles of proviſions, such as freſh meats and vegetables, which may be procured in the counties contiguous to the Bay; from the experience I have had of your abilities in tranſacting any buſineſs committed to you, and of your zeal for the intereſt of your country, I am induced to wiſh that you would undertake this matter and furniſh them with whatever neceſſaries they may require, and if ſuch ſupplies are not attainable by the common methods of purchaſe, you are hereby authorized to procure them by Impreſs.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to Gen'l Greene.

SIR:

Richmond Sept'r 5th, '81.

The Count De Graffe, with 28 ſhips of the line, ſix Frigates, and three thouſand land Forces arrived laſt week in Cheſapeake Bay. The troops are landed, and have, I expect, formed a junction with the Marquis, about Wmſ'burg. The enemy have made no movement which I have heard of ſince this event, but continue in York, strengthening their Poſt. We have called out

out a very large Body of our Militia, which, when added to the forces already in camp, will enable us clofely to inveft York. I have had a letter from his Excellency Gen'l Wafhington, dated at Chatham on the 27th of laft month, wherein he informs me that he is on his march for this State with all the French troops of the Northern Army and a considerable body of Continentals. This movement, in all human probability, ensures us fuccefs in this quarter. But, notwithftanding the very flattering prospect here, I feel an uneafinefs when I confider that your fituation may not be fo agreeable. It is, I think, to be expected that the enemy you have to deal with will exert themfelves at this Critical time, and the fuperiority, I fear, they poffefs, gives room for apprehenfions. I have received no letter from you fince the 15th of July, so that I know nothing more of the Southern tranfactions between that time and this, than what I have learnt from common report. It would give me much fatisfaction to have information of a more authentic nature.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to the Hon'ble Robert Morris, Esq., Superintendant of Finance.

Richmond Sept'r 5th, 1781.

SIR:

Your letters of July 16th and Aug't 23rd, with a copy of July 25, the Original of which has not been received, are all come to hand. At present, I can do little more than acknowledge the receipt of them, but shall lose no time in paying that attention to their contents which their importance requires. A person has been for some time employed in liquidating the accounts between the United States and this State; another is engaged in settling the accounts of the Specific supplies furnished by this State. Both of these, as soon as they are finished, shall be transmitted to you. In general, I may observe that this State has far exceeded the requisitions of Congress in its advance of most of the Specific supplies. The Assembly of this State meets on the first day of October. If you can be enabled to execute the duties of your office, agreeably to your wishes, I am persuaded America will feel the good effects of it; and I hope you will believe that private Friendship, as well as regard for the Public Welfare, will prompt me to lend you every assistance which my situation and abilities give me the power of furnishing.

I am, &c.,

By

By his Excellency Thomas Nelson, Jun'r, Esq., Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ORIGINAL PROCLAMATION.

Richmond Sept'r 5th, 1781.

Whereas the exportation of proviſions will be attended with manifeſt injury to this State, I have thought proper, by and with the advice and conſent of the Council of State, to iſſue this my Proclamation for laying an embargo on proviſions, viz: on all beef, pork, bacon, wheat, Indian corn, peaſe, or other grain, or flour, or meal, made of the ſame, to continue until it ſhall be annulled by proper authority. And I do hereby ſtrictly prohibit all mariners, maſters and commanders of veſſels, and all perſons whatſoever, within this State, from loading on board any veſſel for exportation, and from exporting all or any of the above ſpecies of proviſions, by land or by water, from the date hereof until this proclamation ſhall be repealed, under pain of incurring the penalties inflicted by the Act of Aſſembly entitled an Act to empower the Governor and Council to lay an embargo for a limited time, except as in the ſaid Act is excepted. And I do hereby ſtrictly charge and command all Naval officers, and others in their reſpective departments, to exert their beſt endeavours to the end that this Embargo be ſtrictly obſerved.

Given under my hand, and the ſeal of the Commonwealth, at Richmond, this 5th day of Septem'r, 1781. THOS. NELSON, Jr.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to the Absent Members of Council.

Richmond Sept'r 5th, 1781.

The operations that will take place in confequence of the Arrival of a French Armament, induce me to take command of the Militia that are called out.

I wifh, at the fame time, the Executive may proceed in the bufinefs before them, to effect which it will be neceffary for you to attend, as I know it will give fatisfaction to the Gentlemen prefent to have as full a board as poffible.

I am, &c.,

[Copy fent to each abfent member of Council.]

Gov'r Nelson to Gov'r Burke (of N. C.).

Sir:

Wmsburg Sept. 11th, 1781.

I arrived here this day. Part of our troops are below, within eight miles of York. The French and moft of the Continental troops lie ftill a mile or two above. Our force is daily growing Stronger, and I flatter myfelf we fhall very foon circumfcribe Cornwallis within narrower limits than he has lately been accuftomed to. We have had information of the arrival of the Northern Troops, under his Excellency Gen'l Wafhington, at the Head of Elk. They were to come down by water, and may be every minute expected. Laft week a Britifh Fleet appeared

appeared off our Capes, which drew out the Count De Graffe with the greater part of his Fleet. It is ſaid they engaged, and that after a ſmart conflict the Britons fled, and were purſued by the French. They have not yet returned, nor have we heard any thing from them which can be depended on, but from their ſuperiority our hopes are very high. I ſhall continue here until the fate of York is determined, unleſs the meeting of our Aſſembly obliges me ſooner to leave the Field, and I expect to have the pleaſure of communicating to you, from time to time, events of the moſt agreeable nature.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Blunt.

SIR:

Your letter of yeſterday, by Major Lucas, is juſt received. The alacrity with which the Militia is turning out on this Occasion, gives me great pleaſure. On acc't of proviſions, it is neceſſary that you continue at your preſent poſt till farther orders. W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to Major Boyce.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept. 12th, 1781.

Your letter to the Marquis Lafayette, dated yesterday, has been referred to me. Until I can give it proper attention, and till farther orders, You will Keep Dr. Campbell in Custody.

I am, Sir, Your
Obed't h'ble Serv't.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Anthony Thornton, Jr., Caroline.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

A large body of troops being expected in a few days down the Bay, under his excellency Gen'l Washington, which will probably land in Gloucester, I beg that you will have all the Flour you can procure at Port Royall, or in any part of Caroline or the adjacent country, sent in Vessels round into Piankatank with all possible dispatch. I have taken the liberty of giving you this trouble from a conviction that your zeal for your Country's Good will incline you to undertake a business so serviceable to it, and that your influence will enable you to execute it with the greatest success.

I am, Sir,
Your mo. Obed't and very hum.,

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Wells.

SIR:

The great want of Flour and Meal in the Army requires that every poſſible meaſure be adopted to procure ſupplies, and that perſons of influence and activity engage in this buſineſs. I therefore requeſt, Sir, that you will undertake to procure theſe articles in the Iſle of Wight and the neighbouring counties, where your exertions, I am perſuaded, will have great effect. You will take poſſeſſion of Mills proper for your purpoſe, and you may aſſure the people that the Corn they advance on this occaſion ſhall, if they require it, be replaced. You will alſo take what ſpirits you can meet with for the uſe of the Army: vinegar, too, is much wanted, and Captain Pierce, of Smithfield, has been applied to to provide it. To him you will be pleaſed to make application for what he has gotten, and you will, beſides, endeavour to procure elſewhere. W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to Capt. Callender.

SIR:

I requeſt that you will immediately proceed up James and Appomattox Rivers, and give your aſſiſtance to the Commiſſaries and perſons employed in procuring and ſending proviſions to W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

to the Army. You will puſh down, with the utmoſt diſpatch, all veſſels you meet with which are loaded, and impreſs ſuch veſſels and their crews as are not engaged in the public ſervice.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to David Ross, Esq.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

The great diſtreſs the Army is now ſuffering from the want of Flour and Meal induces me to write to you, although I am perſuaded you are exerting yourſelf in this buſineſs. Petersburg, I believe, promiſes faireſt for an immediate ſupply, and thither I would beg you to turn your attention, unleſs you Know of ſome place more likely to ſatisfy our wants. You will be good enough to continue your Aſſiſtance to the Commiſſary, which I Know will be of the greateſt ſervice to him, and conſequently to the Country.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Davies.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

Since my arrival in camp, I have underſtood that there is not a ſufficient number of intrenching Tools collected, nor is there a proſpect of procuring them near this place. I am therefore

therefore to defire that you will give orders to have all the tools fit for this purpofe, which are to be met with in Richmond or elfewhere within your reach, taken and fent down. Not a grain of Flour has yet arrived from above, nor is there at prefent a grain of meal in Camp. The greateft Diftrefs prevails on this account, and how we are to remedy it in time I Know not. I beg of you to urge the perfons engaged in this Bufinefs to the utmoft Induftry and Difpatch. Water Carriage from Richmond is too tedious to afford the relief we want. For immediate ufe, fome ought to be fent by Land if poffible.

Governor Nelson to Mr. Pierce (Com'y-General).

I arrived yefterday in Camp, and found the greateft diftrefs prevailing for want of Flour and Meal. The Veffel you difpatched from Richmond is not yet got down. This navigation is too uncertain and tedious for immediate purpofes. Land Carriage would beft anfwer them, if it is poffible to make ufe of it. I am fatisfied you will do everything in your power to fend on fupplies, and never were your exertions more neceffary. Is there not Flour to be had at Petersburg, whence it could be brought here in a fhort time? W'msburg Sept'r 12th 1781.

What adds to the Diftrefs is, that the Mills in this

this part of the Country have not water to grind the corn, which can be collected.

I am, &c.,

Any waggons which will bring Flour to navigation or to Camp ſhall be immediately diſcharged.

Gov'r Nelson to Colonel Lewis.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 13th 1781.

For the troops under your command you will endeavour to procure Proviſions from the Inhabitants in your neighbourhood, and you may aſſure them they ſhall have what they furniſh replaced, if they require it.

I am, Sir,

Y'r Mo. Ob. Servant.

Governor Nelson to Col. Taylor.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 13th 1781.

Your letter to the Marquis la Fayette, reſpecting the Flag Veſſel at Urbanna, was this day referred to me. I cannot at preſent determine in what manner it will be proper to diſpoſe of it, but think the negroes ought to be landed, and that due attention may be paid to their ſituation; and, the neceſſary precautions being

being taken that they be returned or accounted for when required, other things muſt remain as they were when you wrote, until further orders.

Gov'r Nelson to Hon'ble David Jameson, Lieut.-Governor.

SIR:

There is at preſent a ſcarcity of ſalt in Camp, and from the great conſumption of freſh Meat, a large quantity will be required. I muſt, therefore, beg that you will give attention to this matter, and procure as much as you can. I have been informed that a Veſſel lately arrived at Richmond with Salt, which probably is ſtill attainable. The two armies remain in the ſame ſituation as when I laſt wrote. W'msburg Sept'r 13th 1781.

I am,

Gov'r Nelson to Gen'l Lawson.

SIR:

There are ſeveral Horſes in Captain Nelſon's Corps that belong to the public, which will be of Service to the French. Theſe horſes, if they have not been appraiſed, muſt be valued by two Gentlemen of your Camp, and a return made of them. The men who came down are W'msburg Sept'r 13th 1781.

upon

upon a regular tour of Duty, and cannot be difcharged until that is expired. Such of them as are on the impreffed horfes muft be annexed to the Infantry of their county. Thofe who are mounted on their own horfes, and are armed with fwords, will be of fervice as dragoons, and may draw forage.

I am,

Gov'r Nelson to the County Lieutenants of Fairfax, Prince Wm., Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, Hanover and New Kent.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 13th 1781.

The march of his excellency, Gen'l Wafhington, with his troops by land, makes it neceffary that the Roads he is to pafs be put into the beft order. This you will immediately have done in your County.

Governor Nelson to Governor Burke.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 13th 1781.

Since I laft wrote to you no movement has been made by either Army. Much of our attention, indeed, has been given to the means of fubfifting fo large a force, and a difficult task it

it has been to keep it in being for ſome days paſt. Our difficulties on this account seem now diminiſhing, but there ſtill remain apprehenſions that we ſhall not be altogether free from theſe embarraſſments, unleſs our neighbouring States lend us ſome aſſiſtance. From your State we would wiſh to obtain ſalt and Beef, of which there will be a great conſumption, this country at preſent affording very little ſalted proviſions.

I am, &c.,

Governor Nelson to Col. Innes.

SIR:

It is probable that ſome ſalt may be procured for public uſe in the County of Glouceſter. The army is at preſent much in want of it, and you will oblige me if you will have what is to be had collected and ſecured. With reſpect to military operations on the North Side of York River, they muſt be left to your own judgment. You will, however, be pleaſed to communicate to me every event of any importance, and you may reſt aſſured that equal attention ſhall be paid to the Militia on both ſides of the River. The neceſſary appointments in the Medical departments, or others in your command, you will make. W'msburg Sept'r 14th 1781.

I am, &c.,

Governor Nelson to Col. William Davies.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 14th 1781.

His Excellency Gen'l Waſhington arrived here between four and five O'clock this afternoon. The firſt diviſion of his Army is coming down the Bay, and is every moment expected. Our operations will now grow very ſerious, and it will be incumbent on us to exert ourſelves that there may be no want of Ammunition. I need not urge you to attend to this matter. I muſt again beg leave to recommend what I have so often mentioned, that every means be made uſe of to get Waggons in the ſervice.

I am, Sir, Yr. Mo. Ob. ſervant,

Gov'r Nelson to John Pierce.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 14th 1781.

His Excellency Gen'l Waſhington is juſt arrived, and the firſt diviſion of his Army is every moment expected. The Proviſions in Camp are ſcarcely ſufficient to ſubſiſt the preſent Army for three days longer, and ſhould the wiſhed for reinforcement arrive before a freſh ſupply of proviſions, Flour, at leaſt, is received, it gives me Pain to think of the Situation we ſhall be in. Let me intreat you, therefore, to leave nothing untried which promiſes the ſmallest relief to us. Not only great quantities of

Flour

Flour, but alſo Beef, will be wanted. All applications with reſpect to ſupplies of Proviſions are made to me, and the apprehenſions I am under left there ſhould be a deficiency, create a perpetual uneaſineſs. Write Often and as briefly as you pleaſe your Certainties and Proſpects, that I may Know our dependence.

I am,

Gov'r Nelson to Hon'ble D. Jameson.

SIR:

His Excellency Gen'l Waſhington arrived here about two hours ago. The firſt diviſion of his Army is coming down the Bay, and may be expected every moment. A very little time now will determine the fate of York, and with it probably that of the Continent. But what exertions will it require to ſubſiſt properly ſo great an Army? I feel the utmoſt anxiety on this account, and cannot forbear, though I am perſuaded it is needleſs, preſſing you to urge to the greateſt and moſt unremitted activity and induſtry every Officer within your reach, whoſe buſineſs it is to provide forage or proviſions for the Army. Beef, Flour, Corn, and the Means of Tranſportation, ſhould be principal objects of attention, and the country cannot cenſure any encouragement which is given to thoſe who will lend

W'msburg Sept'r 14th 1781. 6 o'clk PM

lend their aid on this occaſion. His Excellency appears to be in good health and Spirits.

I am, Sir, Your Moſt obedient
and very H'ble ſ'v't,

Gov'r Nelson to Ralph Wormley, Jr.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 14th 1781.

Your letter and Petition were delivered to me the day before yeſterday. Col. Taylor has received orders to permit the negroes to be landed, upon condition that they be delivered up when demanded. The other articles are to be detained with the flag until further orders.

I am, Sir, Your Obed. Servant,

R. A., Secretary, to Col. Sir John Peyton.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 14th 1781.

As the large Force now collecting about this place requires every exertion to be made for their ſubſiſtence, The Governor begs the favour of you to procure, for the uſe of the Army, as much Beef and Salt in your County as it can furniſh without diſtreſſing the people. The neceſſities of the Service oblige him to make theſe applications to Gentlemen of the greateſt influence in their reſpective parts of the Country.

By order of his Excellency the Governor.

Governor

Governor Nelson to Charles Lewis.

SIR:

I will be obliged to you if you will undertake the collecting of Spades, Axes, Hatchets, Shovels and hilling Hoes, and you are hereby empowered to take, for the public uſe, all you can find in the town or adjacent country. You will Keep an account of the tools you receive from each perſon, ſo that they may be returned when the ſervice no longer requires them. You are alſo empowered to impreſs negroes to bring the tools to ſuch place or places as you ſhall think it convenient to have them collected at. W'msburg Sept'r 15th 1781.

Governor Nelson to Col. Kenner.

SIR:

The rum mentioned in your letter cannot be impreſſed for our uſe, as it belongs to the French Fleet. I deſire you will be particularly careful to ſecure it from damage, and give every aſſiſtance to the Captain that is in your power. The Admiral will no doubt ſend up for it immediately. W'msburg Sept'r 15th 1781.

If it is neceſſary, order your Militia out to protect it.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Davies.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 16th 1781. 10 o'clock A. M.

Yours of the 13th inſt. is juſt received. I have written more than once to you ſince my arrival here, and mentioned the Particulars, wherein I wiſhed for your beſt endeavours. The procuring of Waggons is a matter of ſo much importance that I cannot help again recommending it to your attention. You will alſo oblige me by ſending a copy of the late Militia Law. Our Army has not yet begun to operate, but continues nearly in the same poſition as I found it. The Count De Graſſe has returned from purſuing the Britiſh Fleet. He has taken two Frigates, and is joined by the Rhode Iſland Fleet. In the latter came 600 Land troops. Permit me once more to deſire that you will preſs thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is, to ſend on proviſions with all poſſible expedition. I have juſt received information that 3,000 of the Northern Army are Come into James River.

Gov'r Nelson to Lieut. Gunaway.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 16th 1781.

So great a number of horſes are required for the preſent ſervice, that every expedient we can adopt will ſcarcely be ſufficient to anſwer the Demand. It is my wiſh, therefore, that you order down all the horſes taken from or left by the

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the Enemy which are in the Commiſſioners or quarter Master's Hands; as theſe Horſes are already out of the Proprietor's poſſeſſion, this application of them will be leaſt felt by the People. The ſupplies of Flour, &c., come in but ſlowly, ſo that I am ſtill full of Anxiety on this Acc't. The Count De Graſſe has returned and increaſed his fleet with two Britiſh Frigates. While he was in chace the Rhode Iſland Fleet, fortunately, got in. This latter has brought upwards of Six hundred land forces, and many implements for a siege. No movement has yet been made by our Army. It is ſaid the Enemy are out as high as the half way houſe, in Force, this morning.

Gov'r Nelson to Hon'l D. Jameson.

SIR:

The want of Forage and Spirits begin to be very ſenſibly felt in the Army, the Country around here being exhauſted to a degree that is extremely diſtreſſing to the inhabitants. Forage for 3,000 (thouſand) horſes will be wanted. You will inform me where the Public ſtores are, or where it is moſt probable they can be procured. Military Matters remain as when I laſt wrote.

W'msburg Sept'r 18th 1781.

I am, &c.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Wm. Davies.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 18th 1781.

In confequence of your letter, Capt. Eddins waits upon you for the recruiting money.

I am, Sir, Your Obed. h'ble Serv't.

Not a tittle of news fince the laft letter.

Governor Nelson to Lord Cornwallis.

MY LORD:

W'msburg Sept'r 18th 1781.

The officers of the Virginia Line who contracted the debts in Charleftown, for the payment of Which we are now fending Tobacco, are defirous that Lieutenant Colonel Wallace, one of their number, and ftill a Prifoner on Parole, be permitted to go in the Flag, his knowledge of thefe contracts qualifying him, better than any perfon who is a ftranger to them, to fettle them in a juft and fatisfactory manner. If your Lordfhip thinks proper to grant this permiffion, you will be pleased to enclofe to me a paffport for him.

I am informed that Major Arthur Dickinfon, of the York County Militia, is in clofe confinement in your Provoft. Your lordship will oblige me by acquainting me with the reason of his being treated in this rigorous manner.

I am Your Lordfhip's

Obed't and Very h'ble Serv't.

Governor

Governor Nelson to Col. Davies.

SIR:

Yours of the 15th I received laſt night. Your propoſal to have a magazine eſtabliſhed at Shirley is certainly a good one, and ought to have more attention paid to it than mere approbation. The navigation above can be much more eaſily and expeditiouſly performed by ſmall craft than by large Veſſels; Which latter, again, will be more advantageouſly employed in the lower navigation. It is my wiſh, therefore, that you urge this matter in the Strongeſt terms to Major Claiborne and Mr. Pierce. W'msburg Sept'r 19th 1781.

It is neceſſary when men ſo openly, on ſuch intereſting occaſions, dare to diſobey the orders of Government, as in the inſtance of the Henrico Militia, that ſure puniſhment ſhould await their conduct. Whatever method you ſhall find beſt to anſwer this purpoſe, will be approved of by me. The behaviour of Colonel * * * is in the higheſt degree reprehenſible, and I ſhall take that notice of it which it deſerves, and which, I truſt, will deter him and others from like practices in future. The troops under Col. Gaſkins are ſo ſhameſully deficient in clothing that I muſt requeſt of you to have any clothes which are ready immediately ſent on; an Officer will go up to receive them.

I am, Sir, Your Mo. Ob. Servant.

P. S.—Pleaſe to ſend a copy of the proviſion Law.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Davies.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 23d 1781.

Since I wrote to you on the 19th, I have received yours of the 17th and 19th—the former including a return of Military Stores, the latter a copy of the Militia Law. I ſhall write to Mr. Dick and direct him to make regular returns of the Arms &c. at the Fredericksburg gun factory, which he ought to have done without my orders. Such horſes as are unfit for ſervice, or ſuch as cannot ſpeedily be made ſo, I think it will be moſt adviſable to sell, Keeping particular deſcriptions of them, that juſtice may be done their owners, if they can be found. All the powder ought to be purchaſed that can be met with, and a ſupply of cartridges is immediately wanted, we being under the neceſſity of borrowing from the Park to comply with the requiſitions from Glouceſter. If I can hear of a Tinman, I will endeavour to engage and ſend him up to you. We ſtill remain as diſtant from the enemy as when I laſt wrote. We have been waiting for reinforcements and neceſſaries for carrying on a ſiege, and ſtruggling with the difficulties of ſubſiſting the Army. It will be proper to get from Major Claiborne a return of the Horſes delivered to him, a copy of which you will be pleaſed to tranſmit to me.

I am, Sir, Your Obed.
and Very h'ble Servant.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to * *

SIR:

You will be pleafed, with the Veffels committed to your charge for the purpofe of bringing fupplies to the Army, to proceed up Potowmack River, to take in whatever fhall be collected at thofe, or any other ports on James or Appomattox Rivers. At Richmond, you will apply to Mr. Pearce, commiffary-General. At Petersburgh, to Mr. Yarborough; and thefe Gentlemen, and their Affiftants, are hereby required to deliver to you all the fupplies they have procured on the Aforefaid Rivers. You are hereby empowered to impref any hands you fhall have any occafion for, in navigating, loading, or unloading your Veffels, and all other things neceffary for the fervice you are engaged in. W'msburg Sept'r 25th 1781.

I am, Sir, your Mo. Ob. Servant.

Gov'r Nelson to Buller Claiborne.

SIR:

You will pleafe to Stop all veffels coming down either of the Branches of York River, with provifions of any kind Whatever, at Frayfer's and at Ruffin's Ferry, and, if poffible, have them ftored at thofe places, the danger attending Veffels coming lower down the River, at this time, being infinitely too great to hazard the lofs of any others, three having been captured by the enemy, this day. W'msburg Sept. 25th, 1781.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Commodore Barron.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 25th 1781.

As we are in great want of your affiſtance, I ſhould be glad to ſee you, without loſs of time, in W'mſburg, where buſineſs of conſequence awaits your arrival.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Jno. S. Wills.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 25th 1781.

Should you find it neceſſary to Keep Mackay's Mills going, and that it cannot be done without drawing off the water from the Mills above on the ſame Streams, You are hereby authorized and empowered ſo to do, the public ſervice abſolutely requiring that no obſtruction be given to the work to be carried [on] at the ſaid mills. You will ſend Peter Hernon, under a guard, to me, at this place.

Given under my hand, at Williamsburg, this twenty-fifth day of Sept., 1781.

Gov'r Nelson to Lord Cornwallis.

MY LORD:

W'msburg Sept'r 25th 1781.

Many of the former inhabitants of York having applied to me for a flag to bring out their effects, Your Lordſhip will do me the favor

favor to inform me whether it will be agreeable to you to allow them this liberty; and, if it is, at what time it will be moſt proper for their Waggons &c. to attend, for this purpoſe. I muſt alſo requeſt that your Lordſhip will inform me of the reaſon of Doctor Griffin's confinement on board of one of your Priſon Ships.

I have the honour to be, &c.

If your Lordſhip will permit ſuch of the inhabitants as are now in York to come out, with their effects, Waggons will be ſent, at the same time, for their uſe.

David Jameson to Governor Nelson.

In Council Sept'r 26th 1781.

We are very ſorry to inform you, that in thoſe parts of the Country where Agents are employed to purchaſe proviſions for the French Fleet and Army, our Commiſſaries or Commiſſioners can procure no ſupplies. The people withhold their Wheat, in hope of receiving a preſent payment in Specie. It is abſolutely neceſſary ſomething ſhould be done, or our Army will be ſtarved. We ſhould have written to you yeſterday, on receiving the letters and extracts now encloſed to you, but Mr. Roſs, who has had this matter in contemplation, is out of Town. Was he here, we ſhould propoſe to him to go immediately to camp, and, after conferring with

with you, to make application to the Superintendant or director of thofe agents, fully perfuaded he can ftrike out fome mode of procuring the neceffary fupplies for both Armies and Fleet, that will be agreeable to all parties. Seeing the neceffity of fomething to be immediately done, we trouble you with this letter, that you may pave the way for Mr. Rofs, to whom we have fent an exprefs, and hope he will be with you in a fhort time after your receipt of this. With the greateft eteem, I have the honour to be,

Your Exc'y's mo. Ob. Serv't.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Richard Morris.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 26th 1781.

The great difficulty of fupplying the Army with Provifions, and the fatal confequences which may attend a fcarcity of them, oblige me to requeft, in the moft earneft manner, that you will immediately come down to this place and lend us your affiftance in this way. I Know your averfion from engaging in Public Affairs, but fo important is the Occafion, and fo foon, I hope, will the neceffity of extraordinary aid be over, that, I flatter myfelf, your regard for the public Welfare will prevail over your reluctance to engage in this bufinefs, in which, I am perfuaded, you will be in the higheft degree ufeful.

I am, &c.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Count De Grasse.

SIR:

I have the honor to inform your Excellency, that the Flags of Truce, which were destined to Charleftown, and which, I have been informed, have been detained by your Excellency's Orders, were properly authorized by Government, to carry Tobacco thither, for the purpofe of difcharging the debts contracted by our Officers, while in captivity there, but, as political reafons in the prefent conjuncture may render their departure highly improper, for fome time, I fhall order them to return to their refpective ftations. W'msburg Sept'r 27th 1781.

I have the honor to be, with the moft perfect fentiments of Efteem and Refpect, Sir, Your Excellency's moft Obed. and moft

Hum'le Serv't,

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Thomas Newton.

SIR:

I wrote to you on the 19th, in anfwer to yours of the 17th. Should you be able to collect more neceffaries than are requifite for the ufe of the Fleet, you will pleafe to fend them up for the ufe of the Army. I muft, however, recommend to your attention the Ships which lie in James River, fome of which are as high up as Warrosquick Bay. W'msburg Sept'r 27th 1781.

I am, &c.

Gov'r

Governor Nelson to Mr. John Pierce.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 27th 1781.

It is ſome time ſince I heard from you. As the emergencies of the Army are, at this time, very conſiderable, you will uſe your utmoſt efforts in hurrying down Cattle and whatever other proviſions you have collected for the uſe of the Army—Obſerving that they are to be ſent down on the north ſide of James River, to obviate the inconveniences of tranſporting them over the River at this place.

I am, Sir, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to Hon'le D. Jameson.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 27th 1781.

Yours of the 22d did not reach me till yeſterday. The draft of Major Lintot, if I ever did know anything of it, has entirely escaped my memory. But, in our preſent ſituation, it is certainly out of our power to anſwer drafts of this nature and amount. In a letter received yeſterday, from Col. Davies, he has very juſtly repreſented the bad conſequences of the preſent mode of ſettling acc'ts in the Auditor's office.

The People of the Country being obliged to receive Prices ſo inadequate to their property and ſervices, will undoubtedly decline ſerving the

the Public, as far as it is in their power to avoid it. My opinion is, that they ſhould receive the Depreciation current at the time of ſettling their accounts, and I look upon this as a meaſure which not only juſtice recommends, but Policy, and even neceſſity. I would alſo adviſe that no particular appropriations be made of the Paper State Money, now remaining in the Treasury, but that all demands be anſwered when they are made, as far as it will go. No men can be enliſted for the Army, ſo that it is unneceſſary to retain the money for this purpoſe. I plainly ſee that this money is faſt approaching to its end, and that our preſent buſineſs is, to look for a ſubſtitute. With good management, I think we have now an opportunity of effecting this, but it requires attention and addreſs, and for this reaſon, I wiſh, exceedingly, that Mr. Roſs would immediately come down to aſſiſt in this matter. The money I wrote for, ſome time ago, need not be ſent down, as Paper money has altogether ceaſed to be a currency here. The whole Army is now putting into motion, and my next may communicate ſomething important. I am convinced that my Preſence here is of infinitely more advantage to the State than it could be in Richmond; and I am alſo of opinion, that the Deliberations of the Aſſembly, on the moſt important objects which will come before them, Defence and Finance, muſt take their tone, altogether, from the event of our preſent operations. I am, &c.,

Governor Nelson to James Maury, Esq., Ag't of the Flag Vessels.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 27th 1781.

The present situation of our Affairs rendering it improper for the Vessels under your charge to proceed on their intended voyage, you will direct them to return to their respective Posts, till farther orders.

I am, &c.,

Governor Nelson to Col. Cropper.

SIR:

W'msburg Sept'r 27th 1781.

Business of the greatest importance obliging Col. Blane, commissary-gen'l of purchases, to Visit your Shore, you will be pleased to lend him any assistance, in horses &c., which he may require.

I am, Sir,

Your Obed't Serv't.

The Governor being informed that the Refugees, who accompanied Lord Cornwallis to York, are making their escape across the Bay, begs that you will strictly examine all persons, who cross from the Western to the Eastern Shore, and that you will have such confined, as cannot render to you a satisfactory account of themselves.

ROBERT ANDREWS, *Sec'y.*

[The above was appended to the letter of Gov'r Nelson.]

Gov'r

Governor Nelson to Hon'ble David Jameson.

SIR:

I received your letter, enclofing extracts relative to the French agents. The confequences of fuch proceedings, I have long forefeen, and have laboured to guard againft, by fupplying the combined Armies with public provifions, forage, &c. I have met with much difficulty and vexation in the management of this matter, arifing, partly from the machinations of their agents, partly from the unwillingnefs of the people to affift government, from which former treatment gives them, perhaps, too little reafon to expect juftice, and partly from the defire of handling gold, which has too often been found to prevail over every other confideration. I have been daily in expectation of Mr. Roff's affiftance, which, unlefs I fpeedily receive, I am afraid we fhall lofe the chance that offers, of placing our finances in a refpectable fituation. Our progrefs here has been more confiderable, for the time, than could have been expected, and attended with lefs oppofition and lofs. Yefterday morning it was discovered that the Enemy had evacuated their Outpofts at Moore's Mill, Pigeon Quarter, and every other place beyond the Creek, except at Nelfon's Farm. Our troops are to-day working on the grounds they relinquished. The French took poffeffion of Pigeon Hill. There have been two men Killed and

Camp befo. York Octo. 1, 1781.

and ſix wounded. A sheriff's commiſſion, for Weſtwood Armiſtead, Eſq., of Elizabeth City, is wanting, which you will be pleaſed to encloſe to me.

I am, Sir,

Your Mo. Obed. Servant,

Gov'r Nelson to the Commissioners of provisions of Accomac and Northampton.

SIR:

Camp befo. York Octo. 3, 1781.

The fleet and Army of our Allies requiring large ſupplies of freſh proviſions, it will be moſt convenient for your county to furniſh its quota to the Navy. You will, therefore, diſpoſe of the Beef, which the Public claims of your County, to the French Fleet, for Caſh; your ſituation rendering it difficult to ſettle for it in any other manner.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to Count De Grasse.

SIR:

Camp befo. York Octo. 3, 1781.

Mr. Wray, the gentleman to whom I have applied to provide Houſes and neceſſaries for your ſick, will have the honor of delivering you this. His inclination leads him to render every ſervice in his power to the generous friends of his

his Country, and, if your Excellency will have him furnifhed with money, he will be able, I hope, to procure for them every thing requifite.

I have the honor to be, Sir.

Gov'r Nelson to Jacob Wray, Esq.

SIR:

To enable you more effectually to provide Houfes and neceffaries for the fick of the French Fleet, you are hereby empowered to take convenient Houfes, always taking care not to diftrefs inhabitants; and you will call on the commiffioners of provifions for Elizabeth County to affift you, who are hereby required to deliver to you what provifions they have collected, or are, by law, directed to collect, which will anfwer your purpofes. You will, inftead of taking receipts, account for them with the public, in cafh. If you find an affiftant neceffary, you will appoint fuch a one as you Know to be competent to the Office. Camp befo. York Octo. 3, 1781.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Thos. Newton, Jr.

SIR:

The provifion Commiffioners for Princefs Anne and Norfolk Counties will have it in their power to furnifh you with a confiderable number Camp befo. York Octo. 3, 1781.

ber of Cattle, which, as it will be very inconvenient to apply them to the uſe of the Army, you will diſpoſe of to the French Fleet, for caſh. This will, at the ſame time, benefit the fleet and public; and the commiſſioners of the ſaid counties are hereby required to collect and furniſh to you what the law requires from their counties. The commiſſioners of Nanſemond are alſo required to deliver to you, or your aſſiſtant, the Beeves of that part of their County lying between Suffolk and Portſmouth.

I am, Sir,

Your Obed't Serv't.

If two light Whale Boats can be got, you will be pleaſed to ſend them up immediately to Burwell's Ferry.

Gov'r Nelson to Col. Thomas Newton.

Octo. 3. The count De Graſſe is much in want of proviſions for his table, by which, I ſuppoſe, he may mean, Small meats and Vegetables. It much concerns me that he be well ſupplied, and I muſt beg that you will exert yourſelf for this purpoſe. If you cannot procure what is wanting by purchaſe, you are hereby authorized and empowered to procure it by impreſs, granting certificates for what you get in this way. You will alſo take the Veſſels neceſſary for your purpoſe and their crews, and every other means of tranſ-

tranſportation which you ſhall find requiſite. And all officers of the Militia, on whom you ſhall call for aſſiſtance, are hereby directed to aid you in the execution of this Office.

I am, &c., yr. ob. Se'v't.

Gov'r Nelson to Mr. De Tarle.

SIR:

Camp beſo. York Octo. 4, 1781.

I received your favor of the 2d yeſterday. With reſpect to the rations of Corn, I think that I can venture to aſſure you there will be no other difficulty in furniſhing them than what will ariſe from the want of the means of tranſportation, which, also, will be removed as ſoon as the Artillery and military ſtores are brought to Camp. Veſſels were yeſterday ſent off to the eaſtern ſhore, a country abounding in corn and oats, where I had previouſly directed forage to be collected. Theſe veſſels will ſoon return, and others are out on the ſame buſineſs, which may be every day expected, eſpecially one ſent up James river, about twenty miles above Williamsburg, by Mr. Livingſton, for fifteen hundred buſhels of corn; fodder it will not be in my power to ſupply you with, for which reaſon I would take the liberty of adviſing that proper perſons be ſent up the country, where only it is to be had in conſiderable quantities, with money to purchaſe.

chaſe. Some for immediate uſe may be purchaſed in the neighborhood of Williamsburg. Had we poſſeſſion of York river, abundant ſupplies of all kinds of forage might eaſily be drawn from the Country adjacent to it.

Gov'r Nelson to Count De Grasse.

SIR:

Camp befo. York Octo. 5, 1781.

Mr. Maury, who is charged with this letter to you, waits on your Excellency to be informed of the Circumſtances of the detention of the flag Veſſels carrying Tobacco to Charleſtown. He was appointed the Agent to negotiate the ſale of this tobacco, and to diſcharge the Officer's debts, but is now inſtructed, as political reaſons may ſtill make it improper for him to proceed, to return with the veſſels, into Port.

He is alſo empowered to purchaſe for the State, any Veſſels captured by his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty's fleet under your Command, which your Excellency may think proper to have diſpoſed of in this manner; and I beg that you will aid him with your countenance, in the tranſacting of this buſineſs.

I have the Honor, &c.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Hon'ble Geo. Webb.

SIR:

Your letter of the 11th, accompanying ſeveral others from different Perſons, has been received. Mr. Jameſon and myſelf are of opinion that Mr. Lyon may be permitted to reſide in any Part of the upper Country, at a greater Diſtance than twenty miles above Richmond, on giving reſponſible ſecurity for his good Behaviour, and to be forth coming on the future order of the Board. We alſo adviſe that the Bill drawn by Col. Slaughter on the Treaſury in favour of Capt. Price, for four thouſand three hundred and ſeven pounds, ten ſhillings, be honored.

Camp beſo. York Octo. 17 1781.

Be ſo good as to have the Seal of the Commonwealth affixed to the encloſed Proclamation, and have a printed copy of it ſent to the Delegates of every County, and to each Senator.

Since my laſt we took by ſtorm two of the Enemy's Redoubts. The loſs, on both ſides, was nearly equal, and did not exceed one hundred. Our Batteries are now playing on their works at the diſtance of about 200 yards. By noon, I am informed, we ſhall have ſeventy Pieces of heavy cannon planted againſt them, which muſt ſoon reduce them to Terms, unleſs they take a flight to Glouceſter, which may delay their capture a few days. Yeſterday morning, a little before day break, they made a ſally, and got into one of our batteries. They ſpiked

8 Cannon, which were immediately unſpiked, and Killed and wounded about 16 men. They were repulſed, and ſuffered nearly the ſame loſs.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to the Virginia Delegates to Congress.

GENTLEMEN:

Camp beſo. York Octo. 20 1781.

It is with infinite pleaſure I congratulate you on the reduction of York and Glouceſter, and the Capture of the Whole Britiſh Army, under Lord Cornwallis. On the 17th, at the requeſt of Lord Cornwallis, hoſtilities ceaſed, and Yeſterday, the Garriſon of York, amounting to upwards of two thouſand nine hundred effectives, rank and file, marched out and grounded their arms. Their ſick are about ſeventeen hundred. The garriſon of Glouceſter, and the men Killed during the ſiege, are computed at near two thouſand, ſo that the whole loſs ſuſtained by the Enemy, on this Occaſion, muſt be between 6 and 7,000 men. This blow, I think, muſt be a deciſive one, it being out of the Power of G. B. to replace ſuch a number of good troops. His Excellency Gen'l Waſhington's letter will inform you of the nature of the capitulation, to which I muſt refer you, not having yet procured a copy of the Articles.

I have the Honor to be, Gentlemen, &c.

Your

Your favours of Sep'r 4th and 9th have been received. The interruption in our correſpondence, that is, on my part, has proceeded from accident, partly, letters being ready for the laſt poſt, but, through hurry, not ſent to the Office till too late.

Gov'r Nelson to Lord Cornwallis.

My Lord:

I have been informed that a number of the Refugees from this State, and alſo negroes, are attempting to make their eſcape by getting on board the Bonetta Sloop of War. As they will endeavour to be concealed from your Lordſhip's notice, till the Veſſel ſails, I have thought it neceſſary to make this communication to you, that you may take meaſures to prevent the State, and individuals, from ſuſtaining an injury of this nature. Octo. 20 1781.

Governor Nelson to Gen'l Weedon.

Sir:

Your favour of this morning I have received. The refugees you have taken may be ſent over here, and alſo the negroes whoſe maſters live ſouth of York River; and you will be pleaſed to direct ſome perſon to give papers to ſuch Camp befo. York Oct. 21, 1781.

ſuch as belong to the north ſide, that they may immediately return to their owners. What we ſhall finally do with the ſick and wounded priſoners, I have not yet determined. For the preſent, I ſhall order them to be guarded by the Militia of the County. All the arms, except of the Guard troops, are to be delivered to the conductor of military ſtores.

What you obſerve reſpecting negroes ſecreting themſelves on board the Veſſels, I had been before informed of, and have directed all the veſſels to be ſearched.

Gov'r Nelson to Lord Cornwallis.

My Lord:

Camp beſo. York Oct. 21, 1781.

I have received your verbal meſſage reſpecting two citizens—the Rev'd Mr. Wm. Andrews and the Rev'd Mr. Harriſon, of this State, who joined the Britiſh Army after its arrival here, and who are now delivered up into the hands of the Civil Power. The laws of the Country have fixed the mode of proceeding againſt perſons guilty of ſuch conduct, and we are ignorant of any power which has a right to ſuperſede their force. By theſe laws, enacted by their own repreſentatives, they ſhall be fairly and impartially tried, and they muſt abide their ſentence.

I am informed that Lieutenant Col. Simcoe has

has refufed to deliver up a certain Chriftopher Robinfon, who now bears a commiffion in his corps, but who deferted from the actual fervice of the State.

The articles of capitulation cannot juftify this detention, and I fhall by no means acquiefce in it. It is my wifh to treat the men, whom the fortune of War has put into our power, with that civility which their fituation claims: and it would give me pain, in any inftance, to act in a different manner. Your Lordfhip, in the case under confideration, has, I imagine, the power of preventing it, and, I flatter myfelf, you will at once fee the propriety of exercifing this power.

I have, &c.

Governor Nelson to Gov'r Lee (Maryland).

SIR:

When I wrote yefterday, I forgot to obferve to you that the Militia of this State have orders to conduct the Britifh Prifoners, allotted for Frederick Town, only to the Borders of your State. Your Excellency will, therefore, be pleafed to make the neceffary preparations for their reception. I am not fo well acquainted with the Geography of the Upper Country as to be able to inform you at what Ferry they will crofs, but they will be marched by the moft direct

Camp befo. York Oct. 21, 1781.

direct route from Winchester to Fredericktown.

I have, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to the Commissary at Fredericksburg.

SIR:

Camp befo. York Oct. 21, 1781.

This day, the Britiſh priſoners were marched off from York. In about ſeven or eight days, they will paſs through Fredericksburg. They will there draw ſome days' proviſions, which you will, therefore, have ready to be delivered to them. The number of men will be little ſhort of Six thouſand.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS.

THE original deſign was to confine this volume to ſuch of the letters of Governor Nelſon as relate to the events mentioned in the preface; but a departure from that purpoſe was induced by the conſideration, that the addition of the following letters would enable us to preſent, in one collection, all the letters of Governor Nelſon which can be found in the archives of the State.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that the diligence of Hiſtorians and Biographers has ſcarcely been rewarded by the diſcovery of a ſingle letter of this eminent man—a reflection which ought to make this publication very precious in the eyes of Virginians.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to the County Lieutenants of Loudoun, Fauquier, Spotsylvania and Orange.

SIR:

Staunton, June 19, 1781.

As the tour of duty of the militia from your County will expire with this month, I muſt, therefore, deſire that you will immediately ſend forward the relief of men to join the Marquis Fayette. If it were poſſible that they could furniſh themſelves with Knapſacks, they would find great advantage from them on their march.

I am, &c.

[Copy ſent to the County Lieutenant of each county.]

Gov'r Nelson to Colo. John Taylor.

SIR:

Staunton, June 20, 1781.

The manner of equipping the legion to be raiſed and commanded by Gen'l Spotſwood, will be left to himſelf. The Executive do not doubt his prudence in forming contracts for ſuch accoutrements as may be wanted. To comply with his engagements they will make every exertion the diſtreſsed Circumſtances of the Country will admit; but the State of the treasury will not allow of an advance of Money at this, time. The accoutrements already provided are appropriated for the regular Dragoons already raiſed, who wait only to be furniſhed with them to take the Field, ſo that it would be improper to apply any part of theſe to other Purpoſes.

I am, &c.

Gov'r

Gov'r Nelson to Brigadier-General Morgan.

SIR:

Your letter of the 15th ins't, addreſſed to the Speaker of the Houſe of Delegates, is referred to the Executive. The readineſs which you ſhew to aſſiſt our invaded country, gives general ſatisfaction, and I doubt not but this Letter will meet you far advanced on your March to join the Marquis, with ſuch Volunteers as you have been able to collect. I am ſenſible of the great Inconveniences ariſing to the People by being called out at the approach of Harveſt; but I have my hopes that ſome capital Blow may be ſtruck time enough to enable the Commander of the Troops to diſpenſe with their ſervices at that time. Should this not be the caſe, I flatter myſelf the Militia and Volunteers will conſider the diſtreſſes occaſioned to the lower Country, where the ravages of the Enemy, unleſs Speedily ſuppreſſed, will involve the inhabitants in total Ruin. When the account of the Tradeſmen for the neceſſaries furniſhed to Major Nelſon's Corps, are, on your order, laid before the Executive, they will immediately take meaſures for their Diſcharge. We are convinced of the propriety of the propoſition contained in the Letter, but our preſent ſituation demands diſpatch, and ſo much time would elapſe before the whole System could be effectuated, that the advantages to be derived from a vigorous and immediate effort would be loſt; but

Staunton, June 20, 1781.

but as ſoon as the Situation of the State will admit, We will, with pleaſure, patronize a Scheme which, they truſt, will be productive of the moſt ſalutary effect.

I am, &c.

Governor Nelson to His Excellency Lord Cornwallis.

My Lord:

Charlottesville, July 3rd, 1781.

The extreme Diſtreſs of our Officers and Soldiers who are priſoners at Charleſtown, calls aloud on us for the moſt ſpeedy and effectual relief we can afford them. I am informed a Propoſition was on foot at the time Gen'l Philips died, ſince when nothing reſpecting this buſineſs has been done.

General Scott had a promiſe from the Commandant of Charleſtown, that Paſſports ſhould be granted to ſuch Veſſels as the Executive of this State ſhould ſend with Tobacco, the only Article that is likely to benefit our Officers in that Market. It is neceſſary that ſome meaſures ſhould be ſpeedily adopted to enable them to diſcharge the Debts they have contracted with the Inhabitants. Should I be under the neceſſity of ſending to Charleſtown for the paſſports, much Time will elapſe, and the inconveniences will be increaſed to both parties; I take the Liberty, therefore, of making Application to your Lordſhip, and hope to be honoured

honoured with an Anſwer by the return of the Flag. About ſix hundred Hogſheads will be ſufficient for the purpoſe.

I have the Honour to be, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to the Marquis La Fayette.

SIR:

I encloſe you Papers received yeſterday, relative to a ſeizure of Stores, the property of this State, made by Gen'l Wayne. This Step will, in a conſiderable Degree, diſtreſs us, the Stores being intended for the uſe of our Troops now in the Field, which are in the greateſt want of them. Beſides, the Action, in itſelf, is of ſuch a nature as is not to be tolerated where civil Government is eſtabliſhed, and regular modes laid down for procuring neceſſaries for our Armies. Other Exceſſes are alſo ſaid to be committed on the Property of Individuals by the Troops of the Pennſylvania Line. I would willingly flatter myſelf, that they are done without the Privity and Countenance of the Officers. But, whatever the Authority may be under which they are perpetrated, as firſt Magiſtrate of the State, and Guardian of the Rights of the People, it is my Duty to take Care that they be in future prevented. For this purpoſe, I have made you this repreſentation, who, as Commander

Richmond Aug. 3d. 1781.

mander-in-Chief of the American Forces in the State of Virginia, muſt be veſted with a Power of examining into and regulating the Conduct of all ſubordinate Officers. If there is any thing which you would wiſh to communicate to the Executive, they will be happy in giving you an Opportunity, in the Council Chamber, at any time you ſhall think proper.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to the Virginia Delegates in Congress.

GENTLEMEN:

Richmond Aug. 3d, 1781.

In the laſt Letter I wrote to you, I mentioned that a Fleet of the Enemy's Tranſports, with troops on Board, had fallen down from Portſmouth into Hampton Road. They have ſince moved round into York River, and have landed both on the York and Glouceſter Shores. The uncertainty we were in, with reſpect to their Intentions, had induced the Marquis to take a Poſition not far below this Place, that he might have it in his Power to march either Northward or southward, as their movements ſhould make neceſſary. Few Troops were left below, as it was not ſuſpected that they would come to a Place, the neighbourhood of which they had lately evacuated. From theſe circumſtances, and their being able, with

eaſe

eafe, to tranfport their troops acrofs the River, as they fee fit, they will have it in their Power for a fhort Time, to commit great Devaftations. Thefe fudden Incurfions into different parts of the State, are Calamities which the Geography of the Country, and their poffeffing the Water, make it impoffible for us to guard againft; but I hope the meafures we have taken for our Defence will effectually prevent, in future, their penetrating far, or poffeffing long, what their command of the Water does not fecure to them. I am anxious to hear what Congrefs has done refpecting the Illinois Country. It is a matter which, I think, ought not to be deferred, if they mean to take it up at all.

Mr. Charles Tomkins and William Buckner, Inhabitants of Glouceftcr County, were taken prifoners by the Enemy fome time laft March, in Chefapeake Bay, by Arbuthnot's Fleet, which they miftook for a French one, and, I am informed, are now confined at New York. They were only private Militia men when taken, and, by a Cartel fettled between the Commanders of the American and Britifh Southern Armies, all the Militia, made Prifoners in the Southern Department before the 15th of laft June, are exchanged, and are to be immediately liberated. They are, then, evidently entitled to their Liberty, and cannot be refufed it, on Application being made for this purpofe. I hope you will take the trouble of doing them this Favour, and recovering two good Citizens for the State.

I have

I have, for a long Time, had no other Information of what has been doing in your part of the Continent, than what Vague report has given me. If any Intelligence has been intended, it has met with ſome Interruption. This, I am inclined to think, has been the caſe, as I underſtand the laſt Mail was robbed near Chriſtiana Bridge.

I ſhall, once a Week, expect to be favoured, by ſome one of you, with the news of your City.

I am, &c.,

Gov'r Nelson to Mr. Peter Hogg.

SIR:

Richmond Aug. 9th, 1781.

Your Letter of the 2d inſtant, incloſing the petition of John Claypole and others, has been delivered to me by Mr. Wodrow. The Executive are unanimouſly diſpoſed [to extend] to theſe unhappy People the ſame Lenity that others have experienced, but they find ſome Difficulty in adopting a proper Mode. It has been a particular Object with the Framers of our Conſtitution, to Keep as wide apart as poſſible, the Executive and the Judiciary powers. Theſe Petitioners, having been once in the poſſeſſion of a Court, by whom they were continued for further Trial, a Doubt ariſes whether the Executive can interfere, the Judges of the Gen'l Court

Court being the only power from Whom a Writ of Nolle Profequi can iffue. The commiffion of Oyer and Terminer not having been executed, no further Procefs will be ordered againft the Petitioners until the meeting of the General Court, before which the Affembly will fit, according to Adjournment, to whom this matter will be referred. I muft acknowledge there is a Degree of Hardfhip in their cafe, when compared with the Cafe of thofe who have been equally culpable, or, perhaps, more fo, by continuing obftinate until Pardon was offered, which thefe did not wait for, but fhewed a Difpofition to return to their Duty, by delivering themfelves up to Juftice prior to that Period: but as they are all bailed, no great Inconveniences will arife to them for a fhort time. With refpect to thofe who have been bound over to the next Grand Jury Court of the County for Mifdemeanor, the Law muft take its courfe.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to his Excellency Governor Burke.

SIR:

The inclofed Letter, from the Prefident of Congrefs, was put into my hands, yefterday, which I opened by Miftake. The line of Expreffes

Richmond Aug. 10, 1781.

preſſes being now eſtabliſhed, I hope we ſhall Keep up, at leaſt, a weekly Correſpondence.

In my laſt, I informed you that the Enemy had embarked a very conſiderable Part of their force, and were fallen down to Hampton Road, with intention of moving up the Bay, or to New York; but, contrary to the Expectations of every one, they have taken poſt at York and Glouceſter, where they will make themſelves ſo ſtrong that it will be difficult to force them out. There is a matter on which, almoſt, the Exist-ence of this State and that of the Army depend, and to which I beg your immediate Attention. By a late Reſolution of Congreſs, the Bermu-dians are declared to be on the ſame footing with the Americans, as the Inhabitants of the other Britiſh Iſlands, which is, in Fact, declaring that their Veſſels ſhall be legal Prize to any American veſſels that may take them, and that they ſhall have no commercial Connexion with the United States, which they have hitherto en-joyed in a Small Degree, as to the Article of Proviſions. By this means we uſed to get, now and then, Salt brought to us for theſe neceſſa-ries, though in ſmall quantities, but which, with ſome Aſſiſtance from other Iſlands, was ſuffi-cient for our neceſſary Purpoſes. Our Ports being blocked up, and this Chance of procuring Salt from the Bermudians taken from us, I Know not how we are to be ſupplied with it, unleſs you can aſſiſt us by ſecuring what you have already in the State, and adopting ſome

Plan

Plan for importing farther. As it is probable this will be the Seat of war, we have very little prospect of being able to import any, and, without it, it will be impossible to support the Army. I mention this matter for your Consideration, as, in my Opinion, the Interest of the South is deeply concerned in it.

I am, &c.

Gov'r Nelson to the Marquis de la Fayette.

DEAR SIR:

Colo. Davies, in consequence of my Directions, sent the inclosed Press warrants to one of Major Claiborne's Assistants that they might be either forwarded to Major Claiborne, or executed immediately, as might be most convenient. To my great surprise, I yesterday had them returned to me with a Letter from Mr. Green, the Assistant Quarter Master, which I can view in no other Light than as an Insult. This Gentleman seems to think himself under no controul but Major Claiborne's. The very exceptionable part of my Letter is only an extract from the Act of Assembly impowering the Executive to issue Impresses. Perhaps, if he receives the Warrants from you, he may think himself bound to obey, and, therefore, that there may be no longer Delay in this matter, I take the

Richmond Aug. 15, 1781.

the Liberty of ſending them to you. This Buſiness would have been executed ſooner had I not waited for an Aſſiſtant of Claiborne's, who was to be ſtationed at this Place. Mr. Green at length arrived, but informs me that he is to take Charge of the Office, only, having nothing to do with the District Buſineſs, as he calls it, ſo that, by Punctilios, the Army is likely to go without Proviſions. Unleſs ſomething deciſive is done with this department, the Operations of the Army will be greatly retarded. Major Claiborne has received upwards of twenty Waggons from the Country, which, with the number already mentioned in the warrants, I am in hopes will be ſufficient. If they have been applied to any other Purpoſe, and he will inform me of it, I will extend the Impreſs. I have a right to know in what manner Articles that have been taken from the Citizens are applied.

Captain Muir has preſented a Certificate for the Loſs of two Horſes, at Petersburg. The Circumſtances relative to this matter are exactly ſimilar to thoſe of Major Mitchell, in whoſe caſe you gave an order on the Continental Quarter Maſter General.

Several of the Inhabitants of York have applyed to me for Flags, to endeavour to remove their Families from thence. It would ſave much trouble, if ſome mode could be adopted for a general Application to Lord Cornwallis. For the preſent, however, I wiſh Mr. Reynolds and

Mr.

Mr. Gibbons could be indulged with one. I underſtand Col. Matthews is at Byrds. He might ſend a Dragoon with theſe Gentlemen.

I am, &c.

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